

Our school is part of a community called iZone360, which is reimagining our already creative and progressive school model in order to address the needs, strengths and motivations of each student.



Why We Need to Innovate

Although East Side has been very successful with many students and by many measures for years, including graduation, quantitative and qualitative data show that too many of our students are not graduating from high school (20 to 25%) and others are graduating not college and/or career ready. Although our college acceptance rates are much higher than the national average, our college persistence rates are unacceptable.

We consider ourselves a progressive school, but being progressive does not define who we are; it charges us with the responsibility to continue to innovate and progress no matter how much progress we make.

We are constantly asking and mandating students to step outside of their comfort zone and push themselves for the sake of learning, growth and opportunity. We must continue to ask the same of ourselves.

A New Approach to School

"If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow." John Dewey

- Students are programmed around their needs and interests.
- Classes, curriculum and UbDs are designed to meet all students' needs and be relevant to students' lives and the "real world":
 - Configuration of classroom and instruction – flexible grouping
 - Various adults and peers providing coaching and support
 - Differentiated curriculum and assessment
 - Use of technology
 - Assessment is something we do for kids, not to them
- Students will own their learning and their learning plans towards competency in Common Core Standards and college and career readiness.
- Students will have increased opportunities and expectations for experiential learning outside of the classroom and regular school day.

How can we reimagine and transform curriculum and assessment to help all students meet or exceed the Common Core Standards and other rigorous academic standards?

- Students are authentically engaged with competency-based curriculum frameworks that teach higher order, critical thinking capabilities, reflect mastery in and across subject areas, mirror how experts think, work and perform, and are aligned to rigorous academic standards.
- All unit and lesson plans are created, executed and assessed through Understanding by Design (UbD) with a focus differentiation for all learners.
- All core academic classes include an option to *Contract to Honors*.
- All students who need it receive individualized, mandated extra one on one or small-group instruction/support focused on competencies and skills.
- Students receive accurate, useful and timely feedback around progress toward outcomes and standards.
- Teachers receive accurate, useful and timely feedback around progress toward goals.

How do curriculum and assessments need to change to prepare students for dynamic and demanding colleges, careers, and communities?

- Students show evidence of their competency through rigorous performance-based assignments, tasks, projects and portfolios in which they apply their knowledge and skills to authentic, complex, novel and non-routine problems and situations that are relevant to the “real world.”
- Students will have multiple opportunities to present and defend their work and portfolios in each subject at the end of each semester.
- Each semester, each core academic class will do at least one exhibition using technology/digital learning.
- Teachers have been encouraged through our UbD work to provide multiple and relevant mediums and opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery and competency.
- Students participate in a comprehensive 6-12th grade articulated college readiness curriculum.

How can students work together with staff and their families to create a personalized learning plan that helps them reach mastery at their own pace?

- Each student is individually programmed based on her/his needs and interests.
- All students who need it receive individualized, mandated extra one on one or small-group instruction/support focused on competencies and skills.
- Every month in advisory and every 6-7 weeks with advisor and parent, each individual student reviews her/his academic growth and progress toward individual goals.
- All classrooms and curriculum are designed to promote flexible grouping, differentiation and an element of choice.
- All teachers will be required to have at least one of their professional goals be in the area of flexible grouping, differentiation or individualized learning.

How can students receive frequent and detailed feedback on their progress toward mastery?

- The keystone of each UbD is the identification of formative assessments and how data received will drive future instruction.
- Students will be expected to check Pupilpath online grading system weekly.
- Certain classes/grades will pilot a competency/standards based grading system with the goal of growing it to the whole school.

How will students take ownership of their learning and learn how to work in a variety of live and virtual settings?

- All students will set their own personal learning goals and plans, checking progress weekly on their own, monthly in advisory and every 6-7 weeks with parent/advisor.
- Students will be provided with more choices (and data to make those choices) in each class.
- Students will be trained and supported to understand their learning strengths and needs.
- Students will choose a minimum of one studio elective each semester and select their *week without walls project*.
- Several classes and teachers will be piloting online class pages and *Libguides*, which will allow students to take ownership of their own learning
- Students will have increasing opportunities to use technology to learn and control their choices of learning paths.

How will staff take on new, flexible roles as coaches and facilitators to guide student learning? How can alternative staffing models help meet each student's needs?

- All staff members will take on the role of an advisor to 12-14 students.
- All staff members will participate in a minimum of 1 *kidtalk* meeting a week and participate in 2 hours of professional development every Friday afternoon.
- All teachers will be expected to see themselves as coaches and facilitators of learning.
- All teachers hand out anonymous surveys to all of their students at the end of each semester, which provide formative (non-evaluative) feedback to teachers on their students' needs, perceptions and feelings about how the class is serving them.
- All teachers will include in their UbD unit outlines and lesson plans a space or plan for other adults (or peers) to cause and support learning. This includes learning specialists, paraprofessionals, residents, student teachers, *America Reads/Counts* workers, student interns and student volunteers.

How can we create flexible and real-world learning environments by re-imagining our use of technology, scheduling, and community/home resources?

- All high school students will be provided with the opportunity (and expectation) to take on an internship which will count towards graduation credit.
- All students will be able to take a studio class every semester and choose from a minimum of 7 options.
- For a week in May the regular school schedule will stop while all students participate in a (3-day minimum) *week without walls* intergrade and interdisciplinary experiential learning project. They will choose from over 25 options.
- All students are a part of a grade team house and have a grade based advisor. The grade teams meet 1-2 times a week to discuss students and look at student work, data and needs.
- All of our exhibitions and performance based tasks will be reexamined to look for ways to improve real-world application.
- All students and staff will be provided with email, googledocs and dropbox accounts, which will help them communicate about, organize, collect and own their learning.

Before School

- 8th grade Jenny comes to school to participate in a Wilson reading program small group.
- D’Andre comes to the computer lab to learn mandarin in our Rosetta Stone language lab.
- 2 days a week 6th and 7th graders come for ‘0 period’ P.E., getting their blood and brains pumping and allowing them to take an extra studio class.
- Kenny goes to the morning homework/tutoring help lab to get geometry work done while his friend Juan uses the computers to work on his Water Safety P.S.A. for Chemistry.
- The 9th grade team meets to look at student data and work and make plans to support individual students.
- Members of the *East Side News* class meet in editing lab to touch up final pieces for tomorrow’s broadcast.
- 10TH grade Joel is meeting with his advisor, counselor and 2 of his teachers to discuss why he has As and Bs in most classes, but is failing 2 classes and to make a plan building on his strengths.

AM

- 8th graders start their day with Studio, choosing from visual Arts, Art and Computer Design, Dance, Chess, Choir & Musical Instruments, Autoshop, East Side News, and more.
- 11th grade Jose is interning in a 7th grade ICT English class, working beside the English teacher, the Learning Specialist, student teacher and an America Reads tutor, each of them coaching/facilitating a different literacy station. Some have been chosen by the students and others have been assigned.
- HS Algebra students who are struggling are meeting in their Algebra Enrichment class: 7 students are previewing the lesson they will get later on in the regular Algebra class while 3 students are building skills on customized computer programs, getting immediate feedback.
- 12 High school students are working in the study center/computer lab on Independent Study projects.
- Students in advisory are working in support pairs and trios, looking at their grades on PupilPath and their goals, giving each other feedback and online journaling with advisor, partner and others about goals and progress.

Lunch

- The 6th grade team is having “kidtalk” and looking closely at two students’ work across all classes using LASW protocol. All of the students’ teachers are present and the students are brought in at the end to discuss and make a plan.
- Some students from multiple grades are meeting at lunch with 2 teachers to plan their *Week without Walls*: some are preparing for a camping trip, another group is going to Europe, one is doing sports professions, another a “culinary crawl.”
- 15 partnerships are participating in our peer tutoring program where students are given a stipend to tutor students who are struggling in a particular subject.
- The literacy coach is meeting with the 8th grade ELA team to look at the latest formative assessments and UbDs, and plan small group work for the next two weeks.
- Journalists for the school newspaper are having a “working lunch” to plan for next issue.

PM

- 8th grade history students are working on mock election and speeches while their math counterparts are doing an interdisciplinary exhibition in understanding the math of the electoral college and elections.
- 7th grade science students are writing editorials and letters to politicians and corporations about important environmental concerns they have identified in their neighborhood.
- 11/12th grade sociology students are studying nationwide dropout trends and looking at our school’s data and studying our community to better understand the issues, while 12th grade English students are each designing a social action project to address an issue in the literature or readings they feel passionate about.
- A group of students are working with an arts teachers to curate the next art gallery show.
- All students start off English class doing 30 minutes of Independent Reading in books of their choice.
- Several students are leaving school early to go to internships, Coop-Tech or to take College Now classes.
- Teachers are using common prep to plan, look at student work and data and meet with students and parents.

After School

- Students are attending small group skills classes, tutoring, and homework help with teachers, student teachers, Beacon tutors, and peer tutors. The writing center and computer lab are also open for all.
- Students are participating in a variety of internships and work programs.
- Students are joining over 30 after school opportunities, including Chess team, Model U.N., Robotics, Dance, Student Council, Beat Makers, Poetry, Environmental club, Theater, Science club, Auto Shop, Cooking, Computer Design, Skateboarding, Rock Band, Art Portfolio, East Side News, School Paper, Yearbook, Fantasy Football, Wall Street Wizards, The Barclay Club, Upward Bound, SEO, *I Challenge Myself* Bike Program, Soccer, Baseball, Softball, Flag Football, Volleyball, Yoga, Fitness Club, Track and more.